

1. (Amended) A system for use in gathering information for use in managing a network, said system comprising:

A¹
a plurality of network switches logically organized in a stack configuration so as to operate as a single logical switch;

an entity remote from the plurality of switches for gathering said information;

a multiplexer separate from the plurality of network switches for selectively connecting, according to an arbitration scheme, said plurality of network switches one at a time to said single entity, wherein

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each switch is connected to said multiplexer by a separate connection, and transmits raw data signals that are converted by the remote entity into network management information.

A²
7. (Amended) A system according to claim 1, wherein said raw data signals comprise switch port activity information, and said switches are configured to permit user selection of particular switch port activity information to be supplied to the remote entity via the multiplexer.

A³
9. (Amended) A system for use in gathering network management information, said system comprising:

a plurality of network switches configured in a stacked configuration, each switch having a plurality of ports including a probe port for receiving switch activity-related information from other ports of the respective switch,

a connection between the probe port of a first network switch to a remote monitoring probe;

means for interconnecting the network switches through their probe ports; and

means for selectively transmitting the switch activity-related information received at the probe ports in the form of raw data signals to the remote monitoring probe one network switch at a time through the probe port of the first network switch.

10. (Amended) A system according to claim 9, wherein said switches are configured to implement an arbitration scheme for determining the order in which the activity-related information of each switch is provided to said probe.

11. (Amended) A system according to claim 9, wherein said probe ports being solely for transmission of said activity-related information.
